population served, distance from existing post office and financial position. The existing norms in this respect are as under:

NORMS FOR RURAL AREAS FOR OPENING OF POST OFFICES:

In normal rural areas.

1) *Population*: 3000 population in a group of villages:

2) *Distance :* The minimum distance from the nearest existing post office will be 3 Kms.

3) *Anticipated income:* The minimum anticipated revenue will be 33 1/3% of the cost.

IN HILLY, TRIBAL, DESERT AND INACCESSIBLE RURAL AREAS:

1) *Population:* 500 popilation in an individual village or 1000 population in a group of villages.

2) *Distance:* The distance limit will be the same as above except that in hilly areas, the minimum distance limit can be relaxed by the Directorate where such relaxation is wnated by special circumstances.

3) *Anticipated income:* The minimum anticipated income will be 15% of the cost.

(b) and (c). In view of reply to (a) above the question does not arise.

[*English*]

Thermal Power Generation

*352. SHRI CHETAN P.S. CHAUHAN:
SHRIMATI MAHENDRA KUMARI:

Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether thermal power generation has registered a negative growth during the first six months of the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have identified the causes thereof; and

(d) the action taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

(d) As a continuing programme Government had initiated various measures for optimal utilisation of the installed thermal generation capacity such as:

(i) Renovation and Modernisation of old Units;

(ii) Assistance to Electricity Boards in undertaking plant betterment programmes; and

(iii) Supply of requisite quantity and quality of coal.

[*Translation*]

Northern Region Electricity Board

*353. SHRI SIMON MARANDI: Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state;

(a) whether the Northern Region Elec-

tricity Board (NREB) has stopped the supply of electricity being provided by the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) to Bihar;

(b) if so, the steps taken to settle the dispute and when it is likely to be sorted out;

(c) the total amount outstanding against the Bihar State Electricity Board and the procedure and conditions regarding the payment of this amount;

(d) whether necessary instructions for restoration of electricity supply to the Bihar State have been issued; and

(e) if so, results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) to (e). Bihar is not a Constituent of the Northern Region. Inspite of this due to serious power shortage conditions in Bihar, assistance to the extent of about 100 to 150 MW is being provided to the State from the Northern Region depending upon the availability of power in the Northern Region. However, due to continuous default by Bihar in making payments to National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) for the purchase of energy from the Northern Region, the power supply to Bihar from the Northern Region was discontinued by the Northern Regional Load Despatch Centre (NRLDC) from 0605 hrs. on 26th October, 1991 but was restored from the 0905 hrs. onwards on the same day on assurance by Bihar Government regarding payment of arrears towards cost of power supplied.

The total amount of outstanding dues payable by Bihar State Electricity Board to the various Central Power Corporations, is about Rs. 592.47 crores.

The Government of Bihar has finalised an Action Plan for making payments to the Central Generating Companies for the power purchased by the Bihar State Electricity Board.

[*English*]

Transmission Losses of Electricity

*354. SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK: Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Energy Projects in India-WB aid must focus on efficiency report" appearing in the 'Times of India' of November 11, 1991;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the percentage of transmission losses is very high; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to curb the transmission losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) The news-item captioned "Energy projects in India - WB aid must focus on efficiency: Report" appeared in the Times of India of November 22, 1991.

(b) The Government is in agreement with the main thrust of the news-item and has itself accorded high priority to energy conservation in its power programme.

(c) and (d). The transmission and distribution (T&D) losses including theft of electricity in the country have been ranging between 21% to 23%. In order to reduce the T&D losses, various measures have been taken. These include: